

PR PRIMER

Why PR Is Vital

All day, every day, Americans receive information from the media. Whether it's from a newspaper on their doorstep or an evening news broadcast, media communicate with people and provide information we use to form opinions and make decisions. Today there are hundreds of television stations, newspapers and radio stations across the country. All of them make impressions on people every moment of every day.

When people read advertising, they know that it is the point of view of the sponsor. The media, however, enjoy the benefit of being viewed as an unbiased third party and have a significant impact on the positive or negative awareness of an organization or product. Think of the last time you bought something expensive, like a car. Whose opinion did you put more stock in – the car salesperson or your friend who owns the same car? Most likely, you gave more weight to your friend's opinion because he or she didn't have a vested interest in your decision. That's what makes PR powerful.

How Can PR Support An Army Of One?

The Army receives more media coverage than any other branch of the military. The stories, however, do not always reflect topics the Army would choose to cover. It is our role to provide media with story ideas that communicate messages that will shape the positive perception of the Army. **Look for opportunities to show what it means to be An Army Of One.** For example, the Golden Knights are a world-class parachute team. They represent skill and personal drive as well as the teamwork that *is* **An Army Of One**. By bringing real-life examples of **An Army Of One** to the media's attention, we can work as a team to ensure the continued recruiting strength of the U.S. Army.

When Do I Use PR?

When reporters and producers consider a subject for a story, they're looking for new information. New = news. If you can offer a new perspective or new piece of information, you have a reason to develop materials and pitch a story idea. Dignitary visits. Special celebrations. Evaluate the routine practices on your installation. There may be things that are common occurrences but may be an interesting story idea to civilians. For example, at the onset of the holiday season, pitch local media to interview your installation chef about preparing meals for a large number of people. Have fun.